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THE JAPANESE SOCIALIST PARTY AND
"STRUCTURAL REFORM"

R. P. Dore

THE JAPANESE SOCIALIST PARTY has a new policy, or at least a new "doctrine" and a new slogan--"structural reform". Henceforth the Party is to press for piecemeal modifications of the more objectionable features of contemporary capitalist society--to demand full employment, minimum wage legislation, shorter working hours, better social security, restriction of monopoly price control, state regulation of basic industries. In this way it will hasten the establishment of socialism by a gradual accumulation of changes in the structure of society and by giving the workers, in the process of demanding these reforms, the experience in group action necessary for the final struggle.

And so, one might conclude, yet another Socialist Party has trimmed its sails to the cold wind of the electorate's indifference, and it is true that behind the recent moves of the Japanese Socialist Party lie the same series of electoral defeats and the same uncomfortable reappraisal of accepted tactics and doctrines as have prompted the German Social Democrats to bury their Marxist past and set the British Labour Party rocking with dissension over proposals to rewrite its constitution. It is equally true that the background to these electoral defeats is similar.

In Japan, as in Western Europe, conservative governments have learned how to avoid major depressions, and they have learned the electoral value of welfare programmes. Labor unions have gained in power and secured for their members a share in the rewards of rising productivity. Indeed, if ability to produce be the criterion, capitalism has nowhere been more buoyantly successful than in Japan--not many economies can register a 16% increase in the gross national product in one year as Japan did in 1959. And the statistics which show a rise in real wages of more than 50% between 1951 and 1959, even granted a discount for official optimism, remain impressive. With television sets now in at least four out of every ten Japanese homes, their commercials daily extolling the virtues of bigger and better cameras, washing machines, electric cooking pots, and soon popular cars, it is not surprising that a conservative Prime Minister who promises to double incomes in ten years--as Ikeda did at the last election--has more appeal than a party which seeks a major rearrangement of society.

The Socialists did, indeed, gain 23 seats in these elections, but these were all at the expense of the splinter Democratic Socialist Party; in the twelfth year of continuous conservative rule,

the Liberal-Democrats' share of the votes fell by a mere 0.2% and they retained 300 of the 466 Lower House seats. It was doubtful, even, if the poor showing of the Democratic Socialists could be read as a lesson in the futility of abandoning the purist militancy of an uncompromising Marxism in favour of Scandinavian mixed-economy welfare and identification with the "free world". Their defeat probably rested on other causes--the unattractiveness of their leadership and their lack of effective trade-union support. And in any case the Democratic Socialists had polled nearly 9% of the popular vote for their 17 seats whereas the Socialists had got only 27% for their 145. The net effect of the elections was to strengthen the feeling that some kind of new look for the Party was essential.

The "structural reform doctrine" was the answer; not, as we shall see, quite the same sort of answer as European socialist parties are seeking. It does seem to be pointing in roughly the same direction as the German Party has gone and the Croslandites would like the British Party to go, but with many reservations and ambiguities.

THE NEW DOCTRINE, or rather its acceptance by the party convention in March 1961, owes a great deal to Eda Saburo, the energetic, and on television very personable, General Secretary of the party who took over the leadership after Asanuma's assassination and earned considerable respect for his direction of the election campaign. Eda himself has explained the background to the new doctrine. The party has, he says, lacked any clear policy by means of which it could positively work for the achievement of power. It had consequently been forced into a negative, defensive posture, concentrating solely on "opposition" to each new initiative of its opponents. The result was the predominance of three equally sterile views in the party; there was the "poverty revolution theory" of those who looked to war and economic depression as the objective conditions for revolution; the "piecemeal revolution theory" of those who overlooked the importance of gaining power and imagined that the revolution could be accomplished by an accumulation of pressure for reform in the Diet; and finally there was the "spinelessness of those who had lost their determination to gain power and were willing to accept the role of eternal Opposition."¹

The theme recurs that somehow the Socialist Party must find a way to make the running. The unions, too, despite their well-known penchant for political activity, had in fact taken part only in campaigns of opposition and resistance to government measures. Structural reform is to be something more positive. As Eda explains it:

Even before we achieve political power, by pressing our demands for policy changes, and by seeking positively to infiltrate into production relations, we can gradually accumulate partial

reforms and by undermining the basis of the monopolists' control we can isolate them . . . and work for a national concentration of forces opposed to monopoly capital. When the situation and the balance of forces is propitious, we can then establish, with the support of such an "anti-monopoly national alliance", a government dedicated to the triple aims of preserving the constitution, establishing democracy, and pursuing a neutral foreign policy. From there we can proceed to transform such a government into a socialist regime and open the road to Socialism.²

The partial reforms for which the party will press include improvements in living standards--shorter hours, higher wages, better social security and so on; changes in the industrial structure--restriction of monopoly prices, planning controls over basic industry and industrial location, tax reforms and the strengthening of small enterprises by cooperative organisation; and a change in the structure of external trade--the expansion of trade with the communist bloc and the elimination of military alliances which prevent it.

The acknowledged origin of the name and some of the content of the "structural reform doctrine" in the ideas of Togliatti and the recent policy of the Italian Communist Party has not prevented them from being the object of considerable criticism from the party's left-wing theoreticians--for whom, indeed, Togliatti is a right-wing deviationist. For them the new policy smacks dangerously of "reformism", the archetype of all revisionism, condemned because it is incorrect, abhorred because it is a symptom of moral backsliding, the sin of Bernstein in the 1890s and the object of Lenin's most explicit denunciations at the founding of the Third International in 1920. One of the fullest statements of this critical view came from the professional theoreticians of the Sohyo labor federation, and an exchange of memoranda between the Federation's Long-Term Planning Committee and Narita Tomomi, the Chairman of the party's policy committee, forms a crucial text in the controversy.³

Does not the new programme, ask the critics, rest on mistaken notions to the effect that capitalism has in some way changed? Not at all, replies Narita:

We are frequently told these days that capitalism has become "forward-looking". And it is said that the struggle for "structural reform" is, in effect, a struggle to accelerate this change in the orientation of capitalism. This view resembles the reformism of the Democratic Socialist Party and is one which we reject.

There have, he grants, been changes in the forms of capitalism, due to the growth of productivity and the changing balance of power between capital and labor, but the essence of capitalism--the pursuit of maximum profit through the exploitation of the workers--remains

unaltered and can be changed only by a socialist revolution.

However, the changes in the forms of capitalism are not to be underestimated, inasmuch as it has become possible to mobilise a wide range of anti-monopoly forces and so "partially alter the production relations of capitalism". The workers' struggles to achieve these alterations will create the subjective conditions for the Socialist revolution.

There are, of course, certain necessary objective conditions, too, of which it is commonly supposed that some kind of crisis is one. This is so, but it is important to distinguish between a "governmental crisis" and a "revolutionary crisis". The crisis which brought the fall of the Kishi government in 1960 was a "governmental crisis" which only the most naive could confuse with a revolutionary one. Some such governmental crisis will lead eventually to the establishment of a transitional Socialist Party Government. This will be the beginning. The transitional government will undertake such measures--the abrogation of the Security Treaty with the United States, for instance, or the nationalization of basic industries--as will unleash the full resistance of the forces of monopoly capitalism. There will inevitably be a show-down--the real revolutionary crisis, victory in which will open the way to the establishment of a socialist regime.

There should be no confusion between the transitional Socialist Party Government and the Socialist Regime. At the former stage the "will of the State" remains capitalist despite the fact that the Socialist Party may have captured control of certain organs of the State--notably the national Diet. This control of the Diet is not to be underestimated, since in advanced forms of monopoly capitalism the State stretches out its superstructural tentacles and begins to exercise some control over the economic infrastructure. Still, however, monopoly capital will retain effective control over the economy and the organs of mass communication. The Socialist Party cabinet will form a bridgehead in a fortified island, its only strength lying in the cross-fire of its supporting workers' organizations. Success, if it comes, will depend on the organized power of the working masses. It will mean the full establishment of socialism. The transition will, of course, be peaceful.

Optimistic to the last, Narita discounts his critics' suggestions that the transitional government might be defeated by economic difficulties. Production will, in fact, increase because (1) investment controls will eliminate wasteful duplication and make investment more productive, (2) improvements in working conditions and in opportunities for employment will lead to greater enthusiasm on the part of the workers, (3) the reduction of income differentials will increase effective demand, and (4) a neutralist foreign policy will lead to an expansion of trade.

At least the events of the last few years appear to have

destroyed the traditional faith in the inevitability of a decline in workers' living standards under capitalism, but otherwise there is little sign in all this of any radical new thinking. The scheme is traditional enough and uncompromising enough to satisfy all but the most scholastic of left-wing theorists. But perhaps this is precisely its function. The casual optimism with which Narita treats what on any reckoning are likely to be the very grave economic problems of a Socialist government faced with the hostility of the Japanese business class and the United States State Department suggests more a man going through the motions than a thinker honestly at grips with real problems.

One suspects that a good many of the practical politicians who make up the bulk of the parliamentary party have lost their faith in the inevitability of the capitalist crisis and have only a hazy notion of what constitutes the "essential" differences between capitalism and socialism. A good many of them would be willing to settle for a mixed economy with more welfare, greater economic equality and the maintenance of the present political structure. In any case their major concern is to work out policies and tactics which will win votes here and now. The millennial end interests them much less urgently than the electoral means. But they cannot say so. The motions must be gone through.

The doctrinaires of the left exercise a kind of moral authority in the Japanese Socialist Party which makes it difficult for a Socialist leader to admit in public (though some will do so in private) that perhaps Bernstein was right--that perhaps "reformism", though mistaken in 1920, may be acceptable in 1960. The militant tradition which Japanese socialism inherited from pre-war days is akin to that of the minority religious sect. Courage--before the war the courage to risk physical imprisonment or worse--is a major virtue. Now it can be displayed only in a willingness to maintain a position of unbending alienation from the established order. Any weakening of doctrinal purity, any signs of willingness to compromise with "the world", constitute the moral sin of betrayal. Diet members are particularly susceptible to this kind of moral blackmail, since the established order has conferred on them prestige, a good income, the opportunity for subsidised foreign travel. They are under extra pressure to demonstrate to the humbler activists of the party that they have not been "corrupted".

HENCE, PERHAPS, the theoretical distinctions between form and essence, the insistence that the new line incorporated in the annual campaign policy requires no amendment of the 1955 Party program, the elaborate effort to make change seem like non-change. If we are looking for evidence of a real reorientation of Socialist policy it is at the party's actions rather than its theoretical debates that we should look. Here again the evidence is ambiguous. There certainly are signs that the leadership, under Eda's direction, is trying to move out of the old grooves. But there is equal

evidence that the changes are tentative and easily jeopardized by opposition from the party's left wing.

One indication came in the party's attitude to the Government's 1961 budget. For the first time, instead of producing an alternative budget intended as a concrete illustration of the irreconcilable gulf which separated its views from those of the conservatives, it suggested a series of amendments which might be thought just within the bounds of Government acceptance. (They were not accepted, one should add, though the Government rejected them very politely after full personal discussions between party leaders.) Further, in June, as its first major action on "structural reform" lines, the party announced that it was to start "budget campaigns" at every level of government--an attempt to scrutinise and publicise public expenditures and build up popular support for budget demands reflecting the party's own scale of priorities. Here at least was evidence of a concern to make the existing institutions of society work more equitably, within the capitalist framework.

A second straw in the wind of change was blown away by a counter-draught. The Socialist Party proposed this year to send delegations to Russia, China and the United States--to express the universally friendly intentions of a future Socialist Government, and to correct the general impression that the party's neutralism leaned with greater goodwill towards the communist than towards the American bloc. The left-wing "Comrades for Peace" group, for whom the world divides neatly into the "forces of peace" and the "forces of imperialism", objected from the first to the American visit, and at the Central Committee meeting in June succeeded in getting it indefinitely postponed. (They claimed that word had been received that the Chinese took the proposed American visit to be a repudiation of Asanuma's famous words at a Peking banquet to the effect that "American imperialism is the common enemy of the Chinese and Japanese peoples."⁴ Since Asanuma's martyrdom the most that any Socialist leader can do to amend this statement is to draw a distinction between the American people and American imperialism.)

Equally short-lived was the Party's apparent determination to act with a moderate reasonableness in the Diet, to stick to parliamentary rules and avoid the tactics of physical obstruction, and to resort to extra-parliamentary demonstrations which had in the past so often brought press criticism on their heads. The traumatic events attending the passage of the revised Security Treaty last year seemed to have had a sobering effect. Parliamentary institutions had seemed to be endangered, and the Socialist Party was aware that press criticism of their tactics had been diverted only by the folly of the Kishi Government in indulging in even more spectacular abuses of parliamentary procedure--a circumstance which could not be counted on to recur.

For six months all went well; the Ikeda Government, too, was anxious to avoid provocation and foster the "politics of talking things over". But the Socialists' good resolutions did not survive the Government's adoption of a bill (jointly sponsored by the Liberal-Democratic and Democratic Socialist Parties) to curb terrorist activities and violent demonstrations in the vicinity of the Diet. The linking of the two, with the implication that the demonstrations against the Security Treaty and the assassination of Asanuma were on an equal level of iniquity, was considered sufficient cause for another battle of all-out resistance to "fascist attempts to destroy civil liberties". Once again the street demonstrators were called out, and once again there were human barricades in the corridors of the Diet--and all this in spite of the fact that the actual provisions of the bill were sufficiently unlikely to pose any real threat to political freedoms for several Socialists to have recommended its acceptance before the Party's line had hardened.⁵

Once again the activist left-wing tail had managed to wag the party dog and this time in a way which prompted anxiety about the party's relation with the Communists and the place of "direct action" in the party's tactics. There was more than a suspicion that the Socialist Party had been pressured into taking this tough line by the unions and by the National Committee for Opposition to the Security Treaty, the body which had organised the street demonstrations in 1960 and badly needed a new cause to keep itself alive. This body, over which the Socialist Party shares control with the Sohyo federation, the Communist Party and miscellaneous independent Marxists, is of most value to the Communists who can hope, by keeping this organisation for "joint action" in being, to utilise the relative respectability of the Socialist Party and the massed battalions of Sohyo to further their own policies.

For this reason the leaders of the Socialist Party look on the National Committee with some suspicion, but the importance of "mobilising the energies of the masses" has become such an accepted part of the mythology of the party since the events of 1960 that they cannot easily advocate withdrawal from what is, by any reckoning, an efficient demonstration agency. (One of its proudest boasts is that its network of telephone numbers got 20,000 people to a demonstration within four hours of Asanuma's assassination.) Signs of this uneasiness about the Party's relations with the Communists were reflected in Eda's speech to the Central Committee meeting in June. He went out of his way to attack the Communists' policy errors, to emphasise the distinction made in official policy statements--that there can be common action with the Communist Party on specific issues, but never a common front--and to urge that such bodies as the Anti-Atom-Bomb Congress should be recaptured from communist control.

A fourth aspect of the party's new look was to be a renewed effort to move away from its elitist traditions and transform itself into an effective mass party with a strong national organisa-

tion and a sounder basis of electoral support. There was to be a membership drive and a new emphasis on securing representation at all levels of local government. The new drive appears to be no more successful than previous ones, however. The June meeting of the Central Committee was told that after six months membership had risen only from 42,612, to 42,975. No easy solutions were offered, and some revealing obstacles were hinted at. (Some Diet members who occupy the only Socialist seat in a four- or five-member constituency were said to be reluctant to increase the size of their party branch lest hopes should rise of electing a second Socialist from their constituency--thus facing them with the risky prospect of having to share the votes which now assured them of a comfortable victory.⁶

ENOUGH has been said to show some of the difficulties under which any Japanese Socialist leader must labour if he tries to persuade the Party to subordinate its traditional doctrinal assumptions to the business of coming to terms with the real world--a world in which monopoly capitalism may be exploiting but is certainly not impoverishing the workers, in which the army of white-collar and service workers grows faster than the number of manual workers, and in which middle-class values and middle-class standards of consumption are rapidly permeating the whole nation. A good many of the Socialists' Diet members are ready for a change. But the moral supremacy of the Marxist-Leninist scholastics is such that they cannot be frank and open in saying so.

This has several serious consequences. In the first place, since they cannot be frank and must speak in riddles, they cannot be effective in influencing policy.

Secondly, even if the lip-service paid to Marxist-Leninist doctrine is only lip-service, it is increasingly becoming an electoral liability to the party. For the last ten years the Socialists have enjoyed a certain sympathy from those influential people who control the editorial policies of the newspapers and radio stations--if for no other reason than that it is difficult for any intelligent man in Japan to feel warmly enthusiastic about the Liberal-Democratic Party. Now their sympathy is noticeably diminished. When the Socialists talk of the existing forms of bourgeois democracy being useful up to the point at which the transitional Socialist Party Government gives way to a Socialist regime, precisely what constitutional changes do they have in mind to follow? If the Socialist Party is willing to cooperate with the Communist Party to bring about its transitional administration, what guarantee is there--particularly since the left wing of the party agrees with the Communists in seeing the "socialist camp" as the "forces of peace" combating American imperialism--that Japan will not become a Russian or Chinese satellite? When Socialist statements single out "monopoly capital's control over the means of mass communication" as one of the features which disappear with the final

change to Socialism, precisely what form of control, involving how much limitation of free speech, is involved?

Five years ago the Socialist Party need not have worried that people asked such questions. Those Japanese who cared enough about civil liberties to be bothered by them would have voted for the Socialists in any case since the conservatives seemed to offer clearer and more present dangers to political freedom. But now the situation has changed. After 12 years of large conservative majorities, Japan remains a free country; the sense of crisis is diminishing. The Socialist Party can no longer count on being the lesser evil for a large part of the country's more educated populace.

A third consequence of the party's faithfulness to its Marxist traditions is the tendency for its policy to be formulated within a frame of reference dictated by the current tactical concerns of the Japanese Communist Party--the party which does, after all, claim the direct papal succession. The two parties conduct a running dialogue of criticism and counter-criticism in which each frames its policy with at least implicit reference to the arguments of the other. This is surely a partial explanation of the nationalistic emphasis of current Socialist policy and in particular of its attitude to the United Nations.

The Communists hold that Japan is a colony of American imperialism. Japanese monopoly capital is only its local agent. Hence the fight against indigenous capital is secondary to the foremost duty of anti-Americanism in the promotion of which any stimulation of nationalist sentiment is valuable. (And indeed, as in China, even the national bourgeoisie may have a positive role to play.) The Socialists reject this view only in insisting on Japan's relative autonomy and on reversing the Communist order of priorities--Japanese monopoly capital is enemy number one. But they still regard anti-Americanism as important and tend, in consequence, to accept the Communists' evaluation of nationalism and their dismissal of the U.N. as a mere tool of American policy.

In other countries the kind of internationalist idealism which looks towards a gradual expansion of the functions of the United Nations and a gradual erosion of national sovereignties finds its natural home on the left. One suspects that such sentiments are potentially as strong, particularly among younger Japanese, as in any country in the West, but in Japan the Socialist Party's nationalist preoccupations prevent them from trying to mobilise such sentiments in their own support. Thus, while they wage a continuous struggle with the communists for control of the peace movement and of the Anti-Atom-Bomb Congress, they have never sought to infiltrate the Japanese United Nations Association. This moribund body is left safely in the hands of some of the more reactionary of Japan's retired diplomats.

In other respects, too, the Socialists' Marxist preoccupations prevent them from appealing to the kinds of ideals which in many other countries (and in the early twentieth-century beginnings of Japanese socialism) make up the very stuff of left-wing politics. Their Marxism tends to be academic and elitist: academic in its suppression of sentiment (socialism is the goal because it is historically inevitable and represents a more advanced social form, not because it is a concrete embodiment of valued principles of equality, justice and service to the community) and elitist in its assumption that the ordinary sensual voter can be moved only by appeals to his own particular sectional interests, that personal cupidity and never a sympathetic indignation at injustice to others is the only effective political motive.

Hence the Socialist Party will campaign vigorously for the demands of particular groups to which it looks for support--supporting the teachers against "efficiency rating", demanding an ever-higher price of rice for the farmer--more or less irrespective of the merits of the case. And by the same token it neglects instances of social injustice which affect no organised group interest. Corruption and the abuse of political influence in the allocation of government subsidies and contracts, the emasculation of the labour-standards inspectorate, the absurdity, in an overcrowded country, of allowing the nation's beaches and hot springs to be monopolised by private profit-making interests, the illiberality of the fresh-application-for-each-journey passport system--such matters are presumably looked on as too trivial compared with the great struggle between progress and reaction. Some issues, one suspects, are simply avoided out of deference to supporters or potential supporters who in some way benefit from the present situation. In what other country, for instance, would a Socialist Party fail to make a political issue of the fact that large sums of public money are spent on middle-class housing with minimum income restrictions, and far smaller amounts on low-income workers' housing? Only, perhaps, in another country where middle-class salaried workers have a predominant influence in the main labour federation.

Why does the Socialist Party not do more to draw attention to the plight of the many tens of thousands of temporary workers in industry, unorganised, badly paid, and inadequately covered by insurance? Is it, perhaps, because the security and privileges of a large number of the members of Sohyo unions are predicated on the existence within their firms of just such a cushion of underprivileged second-class workers? Party strategy seems to be determined by "realists", logistic experts in the techniques of mobilising the support necessary to carry through the revolution, who dismiss a concern with elementary justice as mawkish sentimentality (there can be no justice under capitalism). The only respectable emotions in the canons of Japanese Socialist polemics are hatred for the wickedness of monopoly capitalism and an idealisation of the comradeship of the workers united in struggle.

WHICH brings us finally to the tradition of militancy that helps to maintain the rigour of the Party's Marxist-Leninism. This, too, it seems, is a diminishing asset. It was originally a response to the real repression in which the pre-war movement was bred. Now belief in the repression and the imminence of catastrophe have to be artificially maintained. The party slips too easily into a heroic last-ditch stand against the forces of Fascism. Nine years ago, when the Socialists fought the Anti-Subversive Activities Bill on these grounds, there were plenty of people willing to believe that this probably was the last, or at least the penultimate, ditch. Even five years ago, when they fought the elections as a desperate struggle against constitutional reform, the danger of a real reaction seemed present enough. But the Socialists' only remedy for a declining political temperature in recent years has been to cry "wolf" even louder--and with diminishing effect. Not many of those Socialist Diet members who formed scrums in the Diet corridors to prevent the passage of the Political Violence Bill this June really believed that Fascism would inevitably follow if the bill went through. And the lukewarm response to the call for street demonstrations by the normally loyal cohorts of the unions showed that few of them believed it either.

The inertia of the pre-war left-wing tradition is, of course, only a partial explanation of the militancy of the Japanese left. Older martial traditions may also play their part. The students of the Zengakuren today plan their demonstrative, and often violent, gestures of defiance with a zest and enjoyment which seems to draw on the same psychological sources as made their fathers such zestful and successful fighters in the late war. (In a magazine discussion the colonel who planned the Malayan campaign and now, as a Diet member, stands well to the right of the Japanese political spectrum was able to chat amicably and sympathetically with student leaders.⁷) And a good many of the professional organisers of trade union demonstrations are ex-soldiers. It was the Sohyo chairman, Ota Kaoru, who remarked after a recent trip to Europe that Japanese unions were far too authoritarian, and that headquarters' communications to branches smacked far too much of military orders-of-the-day.⁸

There may be other emotional sources. The typical young--and sometimes not so young--intellectual who reads the widely circulating left-wing magazines and devours Sweezy and Huberman on Castro with avid admiration smoulders with a diffuse sense of resentment against authority. Social changes have modified the structure of Japanese society more slowly than ideas have changed, and the tension between the often still authoritarian nature of personal relations in the family, the university, and the work-place, and the ideals of equality and decision by discussion, can lead to an explosive mixture of frustration. A demonstration, well organised with the occasional scrum zigzagging across the road and loud-speaker vans to lead the chanting of anti-Government slogans (sprech-call in the experienced demo-organiser's jargon) can work

off against the Government a lot of the resentment built up against fathers, heads of departments and bosses.

The tension between ideals and the social structure also provides reasoned, as well as emotive, grounds for encouraging the sentiments of revolt. Many Japanese intellectuals not only feel cheated that democratic institutions were handed to Japan on a plate by the Americans rather than won on the barricades; they argue that the Japanese electorate, because of this, does not appreciate the value of its democratic rights. Intelligent and respected Japanese political scientists will claim that the demonstrations against the Security Treaty last year were a great victory for democracy--such damage as was done to parliamentary institutions being easily outweighed by the fact that thousands of ordinary people marched behind banners for the first time in assertion of their right to take a share in government. Although the Socialist Party has adopted the doctrine that violent revolution can be avoided and the transition to Socialism peacefully achieved, there is still a good deal of lurking sympathy for the view of Engels that revolution can of itself have a desirable moral quality. When he pours scorn on Herr Dühring's thesis that all use of force demoralises the user, and says of the possibility of a revolution in Germany that it "should have at the very least this advantage that it would destroy the spirit of subservience which has been permeating the national mind ever since the degradation and humiliation of the Thirty Years' War,"⁹ a good many Japanese feel that one has only to substitute Tokugawa feudalism for the Thirty Years' War to find Engels speaking most appositely to themselves.

Then again, it can reasonably be argued that militant extra-parliamentary tactics work; for an opposition party constitutional processes can achieve nothing. Last year 120 negative Socialist votes in the Diet made not one iota of difference to Kishi's policy on the Security Treaty. Nor did the Socialists' boycott of the Diet sessions or their threat of mass resignation of their seats. It was the tense situation created by the demonstrations and the riots that pushed Kishi into the final humiliation of cancelling the Eisenhower visit and consequently forced his resignation. The pragmatic conclusion to be drawn from these events is obvious: something can be achieved outside the Diet (even if the Treaty itself did, in the end, go through), and nothing inside it. The full implications of this are sobering when one reflects that it was not so much the repeated orderly demonstrations of massed workers that proved effective as a single bloody clash between police and students which resulted in the death of a young girl and so heightened the tension that the police refused to answer for Eisenhower's safety. The careful planner of a future anti-Government campaign who seeks the maximum immediate political effect should ensure that somehow a youthful idealist, preferably female, is killed.

Fortunately there are still large numbers of Japanese Social-

ists who believe that the Socialist Party can hope for more than occasionally forcing the resignation of a government after it has passed the measures to which it objects. If the proponents of structural reform could begin to dominate the party and begin to say what they really think with less deference to scriptural principles, those hopes might possibly be strengthened despite the enormous advantages which a ruling party enjoys under the present systems of election and public finance. One thing is certain. If the Socialists lose such hopes, parliamentary government will not long survive.

NOTES

1. Nihon Shakaito Chuo To-gakko, Kozo Kaikaku no Riron, 1961, p. 240.
2. Ibid., p. 244.
3. Ibid., pp. 270-98.
4. Mainichi, June 16, 1961.
5. For a well-argued statement of the left-wing objections to the bill--grounds, one would have thought, for disliking and opposing it, but hardly for fighting a major political battle--see Ono Masao, "Seibo-ho wa naze kiken ka", Sekai, September 1961.
6. According to the Nihon Keizai, June 17, 1961. The lengthy report of the meeting in the party's own newspaper Shakai Shimpō--and this is typical of Japanese Socialists' reluctance to be frank with each other--does not even print the membership figures.
7. Chuo Koron, December 1960.
8. Asahi Shimbun, February 11, 1961 (evening).
9. Anti-Dühring (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954), p. 255.

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THE UNITED STATES OF MALAYSIA

D. P. Singhal

IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, the Prime Minister of Malaya, Tengku Abdur Rahman, came to Singapore on one of his frequent visits, ostensibly to play golf but in reality for diplomatic consultations. He took the occasion to make several friendly comments about the city, but no one was quite prepared for the suggestion that he made on May 27, at a meeting of foreign correspondents in Singapore, to the effect that Malaya, Singapore, and the British territories of North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak should come together in a single "Mighty Malaysia." The idea was not a new one, having been put forward before by a former British Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, Sir Malcolm MacDonald. What surprised even the most astute political observers was that the proposal should have come from the Tengku, who has been identified with Malay opposition to any such scheme. In the chain reaction that followed, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, announced that "Independence through merger is now clearly before us and will be achieved sooner than anyone imagined two years ago." He might just as well have said: sooner than anyone imagined a month ago.

One month later the three ranking British representatives in the Borneo territories--the Governor of North Borneo, the Governor of Sarawak, and the High Commissioner to Brunei--were in Singapore to confer with the Earl of Selkirk, the British Commissioner-General. Although the conferees issued a noncommittal statement, they characterized the Tengku's proposal as "constructive." On July 1 the Commissioner-General flew to London to report to the British government. It is worth noting that, although Britain--as the sovereign authority in the three Borneo territories, the paramount power in Singapore, and the "protecting partner" in the Federation of Malaya--must be intimately concerned in events in the area, London has thus far refrained from expressing definite views on these important matters.

Seemingly unmindful of the public debates going on around them, the Prime Ministers of Malaya and of Singapore continued to exchange views and at the end of August announced that they had reached complete agreement in principle. At Kuala Lumpur on September 14 Mr. Lee stated that, agreement on the major specific points under discussion having been reached, Singapore would merge with the Federation of Malaya as a "very special state." On the 17th the two governments issued a joint statement to the effect that a working party comprising both Federation and Singapore officials had been established to work out the details of a merger "with a view to bringing about the integration of the two territories and its

peoples in or before June 1963."

Although disclosure has not been made of the precise points of agreement, the names of the working-party nominees, or their terms of reference, Mr. Lee announced a few days later that the proposed central government of the United States of Malaysia would have control of external affairs, defence, and internal security, and that Singapore would retain authority over labour matters, education and certain other departments. He added that a general referendum will be held in Singapore to determine the popular sentiment before the Singapore Constitution comes up for revision in 1963.

On September 30, after another two-day conference with the Tengku, Mr. Lee publicly urged Britain in rather forthright language to relinquish the Singapore base as a contribution to the proposed merger. Two days later, this time following a conversation with Lord Selkirk, he reiterated his earlier remarks and warned London of an "unpleasant time" if its dilatory tactics should delay a merger. On his part the Tengku took the rather unusual step of publicly stating on the same day that he was waiting for the British government to set a date for him to visit London in order "to clear up certain points and difficulties." London can now hardly refuse to invite him without appearing to offer an open rebuff.

ONE OF THE MAIN FACTORS responsible for the recent events sketched above has been the increasing demand for Singapore's independence, with or without merger. The island's present semi-colonial status is sufficiently clumsy and even dangerous as to make some sort of adjustment desirable. A complete British withdrawal, which some parties advocate, would almost certainly create a power vacuum in this sensitive Southeast Asian region. In economic terms as well, the viability of this small, densely populated city-state would be extremely doubtful if it were to attempt to go it alone. The natural alternative to the present situation, namely full integration with the Federation of Malaya, has been prevented by the plural nature of Malayan society and the precarious balance between the Malay and Chinese populations.

Of the seven million persons who live in the Federation of Malaya, 3.5 million (50 per cent) are Malays, 2.6 million (37 per cent) are Chinese, and 900,000 are Indians and "others." The population of Singapore includes 1.3 million Chinese (75 per cent), 230,000 Malays (14 per cent), and 180,000 "others." Thus, if Singapore were to be merged with the Federation alone, the Malay residents of the resulting entity would be outnumbered by the Chinese, who already hold more economic power in the Federation than the Malays do and are multiplying at a faster rate. It is to remedy this imbalance that the inclusion of the Borneo territories in a United States of Malaysia has been proposed.

The combined populations of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei total about 1.3 million, including some 876,000 "indigenous peoples," 355,000 Chinese, and 82,000 "others." The Chinese, however, comprise the largest homogeneous unit, for the indigenous peoples belong to different ethnic and religious groupings--Malay, Dayak, Iban; and Christian, Muslim, and other--of which the Malays number about one-quarter and fewer than half profess Islam. Of the total population in the three territories, only one-sixth are Malays in the sense employed in the Federation--that is, are both Malay-speaking and Muslim. But the non-Muslim indigenous peoples have many of the same economic interests as the Malays of the Federation, and, despite the multiplicity of local languages and religions, all of the Malaysian peoples from Indonesia to the Philippines may be said to be culturally akin.

The largest population group in the proposed United States of Malaysia would be the Chinese (43 per cent). The Malays would constitute 38 per cent of the total; grouped with the other indigenous peoples, they would outnumber the Chinese by a small margin. Although the proportion of Malay inhabitants in the proposed Malaysian union would be less than the proportion in the Federation at present, it would be larger than in the case of the merger of Singapore and the Federation alone, for in this situation the Malays would be outnumbered by the Chinese and would, moreover, lack the support that non-Malay indigenous groups might afford. In truth, the position of the Federation Malays will be weakened by any merger that includes Singapore. One way for them to cut their losses is to insist on the inclusion of the Borneo territories in any union that embraces Singapore.

When word of the union proposal reached the Borneo territories, opposing voices were speedily raised. Although political organization is no more than rudimentary in these territories and no means normally exist for sampling public sentiment, a group of political leaders that met in Jesselton in the second week of July issued a statement rejecting the scheme and then formed a so-called united front to oppose it. When Tengku Abdur Rahman visited Brunei in the first week of July, his appeal for support for his proposal was mainly ignored.

Nevertheless, following on consultations between prominent Borneo and Malayan leaders, a Malayan Solidarity Consultative Committee, representing most of the states involved, was established to discuss the problem "fully and frankly." At its first meeting, held in Jesselton on August 25, the Committee voted to disseminate information on the issues involved.

The North Borneo and Sarawak representatives on the Committee reflected only a segment of public opinion in those states, but Brunei was not represented at all. If Brunei, which is predominantly Malay in social and political structure, is opposed to entering the union, then the misgivings of the other two Borneo territo-

ries may reasonably be far graver. The fact is, however, that opposition has been most determined and persistent in Brunei, which is unwilling to associate with the other territories on an equal footing. The people of the state have not forgotten that Brunei once controlled all of present-day Sarawak and much of North Borneo, and they are proud of the long history of the ruling dynasty, the present Sultan being the 28th member of his family to hold office. Moreover, as the Commonwealth's second largest oil producer, Brunei is economically better off than Malaya; its per capita income is estimated at 160 pounds sterling for the current year.

One need not look far afield from Brunei to discover other problems. More than three-quarters of Borneo is governed by Indonesia, with which the British territories share 900 miles of land frontier that is neither fully surveyed nor clearly defined. Moreover, the indigenous inhabitants of British Borneo are of the same ethnic stock as those of Indonesian Borneo. Preoccupied as she is with the West Irian problem, Indonesia has not thus far laid any claim to British Borneo; but one may question whether this good-neighbor policy will continue long after a British withdrawal from Borneo or, alternatively, a settlement of the Irian question. A possible indication of the shape of things to come may perhaps be found in the statement in July of this year by the Indonesian Governor of West Borneo, who said: "Indonesia makes no claim on British Borneo and Portuguese Timor. But we all stem from the same race." The facts of geography are also awkward, for Borneo lies some 500 miles across the South China Sea from the Malayan mainland.

In view of long-established British interests in the area, implementation of the union proposal will be possible only with the prior consent of London. The remarkable speed with which agreement in principle has been reached on a problem that has baffled previous efforts at solution suggests, to the present writer at least, that London may be the driving force behind the proposal. It may be argued that the assurance with which the Prime Minister of Singapore has indulged in anti-British statements in recent weeks, even to the point of accusing London of plotting against the People's Action Party in hopes of preventing a merger, suggests British connivance. For the British are well aware that the most effective way of achieving their ends in an extremely suspicious Chinese society is to appear as the villain of the piece. If they were really opposed to a merger, a little pressure on the Tengku, who relies so heavily on them for protection against the communist threat, would negate all of Mr. Lee's zeal. It is by no means inconceivable that the British government may have secretly informed the Malayan Prime Minister of its intention to withdraw from Singapore by a certain date, thus in effect offering him a choice between inviting Singapore to participate in some sort of union with the Federation or, in default of such an invitation, encouraging the creation of a power vacuum which might lend itself to a communist putsch. Confronted with such a choice, the Tengku would almost certainly opt for the less threatening course, namely, union of

some kind with Singapore.

But why should the British relinquish the strategic advantages of their Singapore base? The answer may well be that, regardless of their wishes in the matter, they have no practical alternative. Global developments in recent years and the new concepts of nuclear strategy have overstretched Britain's ability to provide men and money in sufficient quantities to support her overseas bases, and the present trend in London appears to favor a reduction of commitments in the East. Thus, Sir John Strachey, a member of the British Cabinet in 1946, when Singapore was separated from Malaya, recently remarked apropos developments there: "I have the haunting feeling that we have months rather than years in which to help what appears to be the one remaining non-violent solution to the problems of this part of Southeast Asia."

IN THE ABSENCE of details concerning the proposed Malaysian union, comment in the Federation has been hesitant and qualified. Both the Chinese and the Indian communities would presumably favor the scheme. The response of Malay communal and left-wing elements is likely to be less friendly, but so far no serious attacks have been launched. Thus, the Secretary-General of the Socialist Front, whose strength has increased considerably in recent local elections, has urged careful consideration of the proposal on the ground that conflicting interests are involved. And the leader of the relatively radical Socialist Party Rakyat has declared that the merger should be a "genuine federation of independent and sovereign countries, politically and economically independent." The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, an extreme communal organization, has refused to take a stand until the full details of the proposal have been published.

Certain critics of the Alliance government have made adverse comments, and, surprisingly enough, neither the Tengku's own Alliance group or his own party, the United Malay National Organisation, has expressed support for the proposal. One must remember, however, that the Tengku owes his position to his past advocacy of Malay supremacy in the Federation and that the Alliance which he heads is essentially a coalition of distinct communal parties dedicated to the protection of what they conceive to be their interests.

If Malay response in the Federation is uncertain, left-wing elements in Singapore (where right-wing opinion is of little moment) have in general expressed support for the proposed union, although on certain conditions that present a problem in themselves. The ruling People's Action Party (PAP), a left-wing organization passionately devoted to the principle of a merger, for which it has been working strenuously since taking office in 1959, was by far the strongest political party in Singapore until August of this year. Now, however, its strength has been so depleted by defections and defeats that its ability to ram the plan through, and

even its claim to represent the electorate, are open to question. For, in line with their past performance, the voters of Singapore have once again taken a turn to the left. In 1955, it will be recalled, the right-wing Progressives were succeeded by the Labour Front, which, despite its efforts to obtain internal self-government for the island, was in turn displaced in 1959 by the PAP, which professed socialism and anti-colonialism in unequivocal terms.

Now a more radical party, the Barisan Socialis (Socialist Front), has emerged and in a very short time has won over 13 members of the Legislative Assembly as well as officers of many of the PAP's branches. It enjoys the overwhelming support of the trade unions, and its leader, Mr. Lim Chin Siong, reportedly can count on the backing of 160,000 workers in 43 unions. More than any other, this defection has crippled the PAP, which today can muster a majority of only one vote in the 51-member Legislative Assembly. The Barisan Socialis and Mr. Lim have been tagged with the communist label, with what justice is not beyond dispute. Nor is it clear that the present breach in the PAP follows ideological lines, inasmuch as many of Mr. Lim's former associates whose communist leanings were equally well known have preferred to remain within the Party. Whatever Mr. Lim's political complexion, he was unquestionably the most powerful figure within the PAP before his defection.

The Barisan Socialis has been accused of Chinese communalism as well as of communist sympathies. This charge may have some basis in fact, but it would seem to disregard the natural tendency of overseas Chinese to support the policies of the Chinese homeland regardless of the philosophy of its government. At any rate, it is interesting that the trade-union movement, which is generally considered to be the only genuinely non-communal element in Malaya and Singapore, is in the main in the Barisan Socialis camp. Moreover, of the six "trade-union rebels" who torpedoed the PAP, four are Indians. For the time being however, and until the charges against it of anti-nationalism can be substantiated, the standing of the Barisan Socialis is likely to remain unimpaired, and its views on the question of Malaysian union therefore merit serious attention.

The Barisan Socialis has stated that, in the event of union, it will insist on an equal status for each component unit, with equal rights of citizenship and of parliamentary representation. The acceptance of these demands would be tantamount to the undermining of Malay supremacy in the union. The Barisan Socialis also insists, again in the context of union, on complete autonomy in matters of internal security, an extremely sensitive point because British or at least Malayan control of internal security in Singapore has long been regarded as absolutely necessary to guard against a possible communist coup there. If control of internal security as well as of foreign policy and defence were to be surrendered to the Federation in exchange for little or no representa-

tion in the Malayan Federal Assembly and the Cabinet, left-wing elements in Singapore would doubtless regard such an arrangement as equivalent to a replacement of British by Malayan "colonial rule." On the other hand, the Federation will not accept responsibility for a potential "communist" state over which it lacks authority.

Much will depend upon what happens between now and the referendum in which the Singapore electorate will choose between the policies of moderation and of radicalism. The PAP will require both tactical skill and Malayan assistance to win the support of the voters who are obviously inclined leftwards. A concession on the part of the Tengku, permitting substantial Singapore representation in the federal parliamentary organs, would enhance the moderates' chances of victory, which in turn might hinge on the participation in the union of the Borneo territories with their non-Chinese majorities. The gravest threat to the proposed union would arise if the PAP should lose its precarious one-vote majority in the Singapore Assembly--a not unlikely eventuality in view of recent developments. For, none of the apparent alternatives--either a PAP-right-wing coalition, or a Barisan Socialis government, or a deadlock that might invite abrogation of the Constitution by the British--would conduce to the establishment of a United States of Malaysia.

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RURAL LEADERS AND THE INDIAN GENERAL ELECTION

Adrian C. Mayer

EARLY IN 1962 India will go to the polls in her third General Election, and for some months past the energies of her political parties have been centred on the choice of candidates for the State and Central Legislatures. Many factors influence this selection. Not only do the records of the applicants for party tickets affect the choice, but the balances of power within parties at both the State and the local levels are most important.

I propose in this article to set out a few of the factors on which political power is at present based at the local, constituency level. Since these are factors that will endure beyond the Election, they are not necessarily best considered with the hindsight which the results will provide. My material comes from a constituency studied since 1954 in Madhya Pradesh.¹ I make no claim that it is "typical", but only that the factors at work there may exist in other places.

The constituency comprised (in 1957) a total electorate of 88,664, voting for a General and a Harijan Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). It is rural, save for one town of 35,000 inhabitants and two others of about 1,500. The constituency has returned Congress Party members in each Election, though not without a strong Jan Sangh challenge in 1957. Other parties include the Praja Socialist Party and, in the years since 1957, the Communist Party; but my remarks refer mainly to the Congress, since it alone has had considerable membership and organisation in the area. Political activity dates from the Second World War, and has hitherto been led largely by townspeople.

The main political development in the constituency since the last General Election (1957) has been the growth of the system of rural local government as a basis for political power. The system works through elected committees (panchayat), of which the constituency has 87 at the village level, each sending a representative to one of two Tehsil Committees, which in turn are represented on a District Committee.² The Village Committees are responsible for local works for which they raise funds. They also supervise the expenditure of government grants for a variety of village improvements. These grants are made on the advice of Development Committees headed by senior officials, in whose deliberations the representatives of Tehsil and District Committees take a leading part because of their knowledge of village conditions and because of their later role in seeing that the works are carried out.

During the first two Five-Year Plans some Rs.1,200,000 were allocated to villages in the District (of which the constituency received between 20 and 25 per cent) by the administration, with an additional Rs.1,750,000 spent in the community-development blocks in the constituency. These large sums of money have placed great power in the hands of the two or three main rural leaders who head the Committees and advise on allocation. For, at best, a grant means both employment and improvements in a village; and, at worst, it results in the enrichment of Village Committee members. In either case, the rural leaders are doing the village a favour which can be put in a credit balance of obligations, to be cashed in the form of votes on committees or in elections.

Cooperatives in the constituency provide similar avenues of influence. There are 102 rural cooperative societies of various kinds, many of whose chairmen are at the same time chairmen of the Village Committees. Their financing is done by the Dewas Central Cooperative Bank, which had Rs.5,200,000 of working capital (for the whole District) in 1960. Elections to the Board of Directors--who, in 1960, took over the chairmanship, and thereby the control of Bank policy, from the senior District official--are made by representatives of the constituent cooperatives, of which rural societies form the overwhelming majority. It is therefore hardly surprising that the prominent men of the rural committee system are also directors of the Bank. They are, moreover, on the Board of the Marketing Society in the constituency's headquarters; they advise on the selection of secretaries for the Village Committees; and their expanding interests include active campaigning in municipal elections, and the founding of a weekly newspaper in which comments are made on both rural and urban affairs. How did they reach the position they now occupy?

I have outlined elsewhere³ some of the factors behind elections in Village Committees. Mainly they comprise village and inter-village politics, into which caste, kin-group, class and personal rivalries may enter. A prerequisite of rural leadership is the skill with which a man can manipulate these rivalries to his advantage--by getting his supporters made chairmen and sent as representatives to higher committees where they will elect him to be their chairman. He recruits support by alliances with village leaders, based either on ties of common caste or on past favours he has provided, or on the future opportunities which village leaders think more likely to come from him than from his rivals. Favours flow mainly from his position as the middleman between officials and villagers, since he aids the latter in their urban contacts and promises official approval of their development projects.

Placing a large number of people in one's debt--forging a political machine, in fact--takes a lot of time and skill. Knowledge of local situations must be extensive; the rural leader must always be available for consultation, and must be in frequent and amicable contact with officials and urban politicians. The first elections

to rural committees produced leaders who had some political background as Congress members but who were "amateurs" in the sense that they did little to organise machines of this kind. The second Election, in 1956, saw their places taken by younger, full-time leaders, who had spent the intervening years making their political contacts in the countryside. These men are mainly Rajputs, since this is the dominant rural caste of the constituency. They are landowners, and have had some formal education and often previous administrative experience as village headmen. The measure of their success came when they asked for Congress Party support of their candidatures for District Committee posts; for their threat to resign from the Party and to work against it during the impending General Election was a large factor behind their endorsement by Congress. Later, they played a significant part in the Election victory of the (townsman) Congress candidate against a Jan Sangh candidate of their own caste.

The situation since that Election has been one in which continued financial aid to the villages, and continued progress towards decentralisation of authority, has placed more power in the hands of these leaders. From being the allies and supporters of urban politicians, they have become the politicians' rivals for seats in the Legislative Assembly. This is because they are thought to control a vital number of village votes. They may not have sole control of the rural vote, but the balance of votes needed for victory may well lie with them. Consequently, there is a temptation to demand the Legislative Assembly ticket for one of their number.

LET US CONSIDER the position as a rural leader might see it. There are several good reasons for becoming an MLA. Strongest, perhaps, is the voice of ambition. To sit in the Assembly, to have frequent contact with the Ministry--even to become a Minister--is clearly a dazzling thought for an ambitious person. Then, too, if all went well, one's power in the constituency would greatly increase. The favours one could give would be multiplied, and the followers one could command would increase accordingly. Besides this, one would be able to act more effectively as the farmers' mouthpiece. Many rural leaders think that villagers have been neglected and exploited by townsmen, and are very vocal in opposing measures which appear to favour the town. An example is the fact that villagers must contribute their labour before getting a grant for a school building, whereas the government builds schools in towns without levying this contribution.

But there are also reasons against becoming an MLA. An important one is that a man might thereby lose touch with his supporters. Villagers are quite used to being represented by a townsman, who may come to the village annually or not visit them at all outside the election campaign. They grumble, but their dissatisfaction merges into their general attitude towards the town. Rural leaders

have built up their support through close contact with many village leaders. There would be much greater discontent if they became increasingly remote. Yet they might not be able to devote the same amount of time to their followers as before. Already, paper-work forces them to spend an increasing amount of time in the District headquarters. They counteract this by continuing to act like countrymen, wearing simple clothes and living in rural style; and their control over the jeeps of the District Committee and Cooperative Bank is an important means of maintaining contacts. But if they periodically disappeared into thin air in the State capital, this device might no longer be possible.

Weaker personal control of the machine which had elected them would be made more serious by an increasing number of rivals and enemies. The higher the post, the more numerous the rivals, and a rural MLA would have to fight not only rural opponents but also townsmen who believe that they should have had the ticket. Again, an MLA is under constant bombardment by petitions from his constituents. Some of these require intervention with the government--as in the case of a request to transfer a relative to a better posting. Others require the MLA to take sides in disputes among his constituents--as in cases of aid solicited by constituents involved in property cases. The MLA cannot avoid making enemies, since he can never satisfy all these requests. The risk therefore exists that in a future election the rural leader may lose his Legislature seat in addition to forfeiting his dominant position in the rural system. (It is, of course, always possible that he will lose a rural committee election anyway.) This is a perennial dilemma for politicians seeking other posts, to be sure, but the rural leaders have encountered it for the first time.

I have shown the choice in terms of the rural leader's ability to enlist and hold support. But his deliberation must also take into account the power attached to the position to which he aspires. I think it true to say that the position of MLA has hitherto been the summit of local political ambition; and in spite of a growing realisation of the drawbacks involved--as indicated above--urban politicians would still jump for an MLA's ticket. But the rural leaders have to consider the increased power which is soon to be given to leaders in the rural system. Under the policy of decentralisation of authority, new legislation for the rural committees is shortly to be enacted, and was being drafted during 1960. This will place the power to plan and to allocate development funds in the hands of the non-official members of committees. Hitherto these decisions have been made by officials, though advised by non-officials.

It is not known what power the government will reserve to itself, to supersede committees and to overrule decisions. During the drafting of the Bill, rural leaders in the constituency were extremely concerned to find that government proposed to reserve to itself any powers at all. They saw in this the negation of the

whole policy, and said that unless they had complete freedom of action, the designation of the new Act as "decentralised" would be false.⁴ But if rural leaders feel that they are given real control of rural planning--and that any reserved powers will not be misused--they may well consider that a Tehsil or District Committee chairman is more powerful than an MLA. Clearly, rural leaders want eventually to go further than the rural system. For only as Ministers can they control events. But they may well wish to wait until a new Act has consolidated their power further. At present they might be able to get tickets in the teeth of opposition; but later, they may well be asked to stand.

IT CAN BE SEEN that no certain advantage accrues to the rural leader from becoming an MLA at this stage. It is in any case by no means sure that he would be given the ticket. His present position in the Congress Party is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, if he is a "good party man" and supports the local urban leadership, he may not get a ticket because there is a tendency to take better educated men as MLAs if possible. On the other hand, if, by flirting with opposition parties, he tries to make the MLA ticket the price for his support, he runs the risk of being ruled out because he is unreliable.

The dilemma is made the sharper because pressure from his rural followers pushes him into the stance of a rebel. Villagers tend to be "agin' the government" because, as I have said, they see it as the promoter of urban interests, and because they accuse it of inefficiency and corruption. They are therefore pleased when their representative speaks against the ruling party, and makes an at least outward show of resistance to officials. A leader who does not do this tends to be labelled a tool of the government. Moreover, some rural leaders share their followers' view, and may oppose the government and its party from conviction as well as from tactical motives. They may contact other parties, to explore their programmes, for the same reason. It is possible for them to do this without being expelled from the Congress Party because the Congress leaders need the rural vote badly enough to overlook what in other Congressmen would be termed major breaches of discipline.

Rural leaders are, in fact, given remarkable latitude as Congressmen, and their flirtations with other parties cause heart-searchings among urban Congress leaders, who are not reassured by being teasingly told that their rural colleagues are becoming communist. The situation is made possible by the imponderable rural vote; for it is village rather than urban polling stations which have been lost to Congress in each previous Election.

Yet the rural leaders cannot go too far in defying Congress, since they also have exploitable weaknesses. For one thing, they and their principal allies are landowners, often substantial ones.

A strong Congress appeal for cooperative farming on the eve of an Election would either lose them their allies (if they agreed) or the vote of the landless (if they opposed). Again, charges can always be made against the quality of their administration of the Committees, which would prejudice their chances. Finally, urban Congressmen are not without power through patronage, which could be used to wean at least some supporters away from rural opponents.

The situation I describe is one in which the Congress machine (run largely by urban politicians) and the rural machine (run largely by at least nominal Congressmen) are living in an uneasy partnership, made possible by the need each has of the other. The crystallisation of this position is, I think, the main development in the political situation since 1955. To say that, in such a situation, rural influence is shown by whether a rural or an urban leader is given the MLA's ticket is debatable.⁵ For an urban MLA, with a powerful rural leader behind him in his constituency, will perforce become very interested in rural matters, if not a protagonist of rural interests.⁶

The allocation of the ticket is the result of a complex interbalancing of forces, into which personal qualifications, connexions and ambitions, government policies, alternative positions of power, and the degree to which the electorate is thought to be influenced by various leaders, all enter. It is not necessarily the direct measure of the power of any one section in the constituency. An assessment of the influence of rural, or of any other, leadership must therefore include the comparative analysis of studies of constituencies that are thought to be subject to the factors briefly mentioned here.

NOTES

1. In 1954-56 I made a rural study only; in 1960 I was granted leave by the School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London, to make a study of general political process in the area.
2. I speak here of the former Madhya Bharat State. The parts of the State previously in Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal and Vindhya Pradesh are governed by different legislation, which it is hoped soon to merge into one Act.
3. A. C. Mayer, "Local Government Elections in a Malwa Village", Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), Vol. XI, Nos. 3-4, pp. 189-202.
4. See P. K. Chaudhuri, "Decentralisation or Delegation of Power?" Economic Weekly (Bombay), Vol. XI, No. 40, p. 1365, for an account of the powers reserved by the Rajasthan Government in similar legislation.

5. See, for instance, M. Weiner, "Changing Patterns of Leadership in West Bengal", Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, p. 282, for a discussion of rural influence based on the birthplaces of West Bengal MLAs, many of whom were following occupations (p. 284) which might well classify them as "urban" in the sense of the present article. (But see also the remarks of A. M., "Political Leadership in West Bengal: A Comment", Economic Weekly, Vol. XI, No. 39, p. 1329, on Weiner's statistics and sample.)

6. A summary of questions asked during the 1959 and 1960 Autumn Sessions of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly by the urban MLAs of the constituency studied reveals that 8 related to the constituency's main town, 20 to the rest of the constituency, and 18 to other matters--a proportion which does not indicate a lack of interest in the rural areas, though rurally based MLAs might have concentrated further on the countryside.

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CHINESE EDUCATION--PERENNIAL MALAYAN PROBLEM

Leon Comber

ALMOST EVERY DAY in the Chinese vernacular press in Malaya there is discussion of Chinese education, and many interesting points are raised. If one looks beyond the printed words, one will see that there is an ever-recurring fear and suspicion among the Chinese community that the Government is pursuing a policy in regard to Chinese education which will lead to the elimination of the teaching of Chinese language and literature and to the eventual eradication of Chinese culture. In a plural society such as Malaya emotions are easily aroused, particularly over such matters as differences in language, religion and culture, and it is healthier to face up to them than to pretend that they simply do not exist.

In broad terms, the problem may be spelled out in this way. The Malay and Chinese communities are fairly equally balanced as far as numbers are concerned, although the Malay is slightly larger than the Chinese. The Malays hold the political power in the country, and the Chinese the economic. Malay has been officially adopted as the national language, and will become the main medium of instruction in schools after 1967. Islam is the state religion, although other religions may be practised. And Malayan culture is still in the melting pot.

As far as education is concerned, the Government is determined to introduce a "new-look" policy that will result in all schools eventually using the same language (Malay) as the medium of instruction. This policy, many Chinese educationists believe, has sounded the death-knell of the Chinese language, and will result in Chinese being relegated to a second-class status in Malaya. All Chinese secondary schools are required to decide by the end of 1961 whether they will be either fully assisted (national-type secondary schools), in which case the main medium of instruction will be one of the two official languages--Malay or English--or independent, in which case they may continue to use Chinese as the main medium of instruction but they will not receive any aid whatsoever from the Government. The decision is not an easy one for the Chinese schools to make. At the moment, it seems that the majority of the 38 Chinese secondary schools in the Federation of Malaya now receiving partial grants-in-aid from the Government will refuse to be converted to national-type schools.

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Federation's Prime Minister, has tried his best to convince the schools that the Government has no sinister intentions in regard to Chinese education, and that Chinese

language and literature may continue to be studied as a subject throughout the educational system from primary school through secondary school to university level--the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur has just instituted an honours degree course in Chinese studies--but to no avail. The Chinese still regard the present policy as a threat to their time-enshrined system of education. Of course, Chinese education has always given the authorities a headache in Malaya, and has always been regarded as the enfant terrible of the educational system. Why is this? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to take a brief glance into the past.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, education in Malaya, both in Government and in private schools, left a great deal to be desired. It had in fact been relegated to a position of minor importance. In 1914, for instance, the net expenditure on education was as low as 1.11 per cent of the total government budget for the Malay States. Priority was then given to education in English, and not in the vernacular languages, to turn out clerks and other subordinate workers required for government service and foreign commercial firms.

As far as Chinese schools were concerned, they were allowed to exist for the most part outside the orbit of the Education Department. In a way, this suited the Chinese very well, for in those days the whole of Chinese society existed in a "world within a world", and the Chinese really governed themselves within the all-embracing framework of the Chinese family system, clan associations, secret societies, and so on, although outwardly paying lip-service to the ordinary law of the land. Chinese education was then financed mainly by contributions from wealthy Chinese towkeys (business magnates) and by levies and subscriptions from the Chinese community. Chinese schools were mostly private schools run along business lines, charging fees and making a profit on the sale of school books, with the headmaster and teachers often supplementing their meagre salaries by working part-time as businessmen.

But soon the Government, and indeed the public, came to realise that the whole educational system was ill-adjusted and needed overhauling, and that far too little money and attention had been given to it. In 1919 and 1921, committees of enquiry were appointed, the system of grants-in-aid to schools was gone into, and the total amount of public funds spent on education was dramatically increased.

It was then decided to give increased grants-in-aid to private schools to enable them to pay their teachers reasonable salaries, with the proviso that the Education Department should exercise control over the curriculum, standards of teaching, etc.

In 1935 the Government agreed that grants-in-aid should be

made to all Chinese vernacular schools, provided that they conformed to the requirements of the Education Department. This move, however, did not meet with the overwhelming support which was expected from the Chinese schools. By that time, they had grown used to the idea of looking after themselves, and they did not take easily to the idea of the Government trying to impose a measure of control over them. "We might have welcomed your help in the past," was the gist of their reply, "but we can do without it now."

Another problem that bedevilled Chinese schools was politics. In Malaya at that time, only a small percentage of Chinese teachers had been trained by the Education Department. The majority had been recruited from China, where they had been exposed to, and had often succumbed to, the viruses of Chinese nationalism and communism. Their teachings, therefore, were tainted with one or the other, or with both, of these brands of politics. And after the Cultural Revolution which followed in the wake of the 1911 Chinese Revolution, the virus that spread fastest among Chinese intellectuals was that of communism.

The outcome was that in Malaya in the 1920's and 1930's the Government had a hard time dealing with the political agitation that arose in Chinese schools. The promulgation of the 1935 Schools Ordinance helped the Government to some extent in this respect, but it did not supply a complete answer. In brief, this legislation provided for the obligatory registration of all schools, and for the submission of the names of teachers and members of committees of management for the approval of the authorities. The Director of Education was empowered to withhold the registration of a school and to refuse to register a teacher or a member of a committee of management if he thought it in the interest of the state to do so.

The provision of suitable textbooks for Chinese schools then came in for attention. Most of the Chinese textbooks used in Malaya were imported from China because there were none available locally. These books were, to say the least, not helpful in inculcating a Malayan outlook and nationality, and undid a lot of the good work that the Government was doing. Eventually, many of them were placed on the proscribed publications list and their importation into Malaya was banned.

In the 1920's also, the more highly organised influence of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), or Nanyang Communist Party as it was then called, began to be felt in Chinese schools for the first time, and many Chinese night-schools in particular became hot-beds of communism. This influence seemed to grow over the years in spite of everything the authorities did to combat it, and it was only temporarily halted by the Japanese occupation in 1942. In the confused period that followed the Japanese surrender in 1945, the MCP made a strong bid to bring all Chinese schools under control. In the towns it tried to do so by infiltrating into Chinese clubs,

guilds and associations. In many rural areas it set up its own so-called "schools", which taught very little besides communist ideology. It attempted also to control the appointment of school teachers and members of committees of management to ensure that only those persons who were communists or fellow-travellers were taken on.

After the Second World War, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) also began to show an interest in Chinese schools in Malaya, although its approach was different from that of the MCP. The CCP offered scholarships on very favourable terms to Malayan-Chinese students for study at universities and colleges in China. The offer was a tempting one because in those days there was no educational institution in Malaya at which graduates from Chinese secondary schools could continue their education at tertiary level. The University of Malaya, for instance, catered only for those students who were English educated. Many of the students who left for China, in many cases in the face of parental opposition, were never to come back to Malaya, for the Government later imposed a ban on their return.

This, then, is a very brief sketch of a subject about which 20 volumes could be written, but it may give some idea of the troubled background to Chinese education in Malaya, and of the difficult task the Government has in safeguarding the rights of the Malayan-Chinese and in encouraging in them a sense of loyalty to their country of adoption. One thing is obvious, and that is that the old system failed to create a truly national education so necessary for a newly independent country. How the Government now proposes to do this will be seen in the discussion of the new educational policy that follows.

THE GOVERNMENT'S "new-look" policy is based on the 1956 Razak Report, many of the recommendations of which are enshrined in the 1957 Education Ordinance, and on the 1960 Talib Report. The first Report was prepared by a committee of experts under the chairmanship of Dato Abdul Razak, then Minister of Education and now Deputy Prime Minister. The second Report was prepared by a committee under the chairmanship of Inche Abdul Rahman bin Haji Talib, the present Minister of Education, which was appointed to examine the working of the Razak Report in the light of experience. The pivotal point of the new policy is contained in Section 3 of the 1957 Education Ordinance, which reads as follows:

The educational policy of the Federation is to establish a national system of education acceptable to the people as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, with the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of peoples other than Malays living in the country.

How is the new policy going to be translated into action? The Talib Report deals with it under the following headings: (1) the provision of primary education at Government expense in each of the four main languages of Malaya, viz., Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil; (2) the bringing together of all the language streams at secondary level in fully assisted, national-type secondary schools using mainly either Malay or English; (3) the use of these two official languages for both instruction and examination purposes; and (4) the establishment of common syllabuses and timetables for all schools.

It should also be borne in mind that under the Federal Constitution Malay has become the national language, although English will continue to be used until 1967 as an alternate official language. In other words, after 1967 Malay will be the sole official language and the main medium of instruction in all fully assisted national-type secondary schools.

The Chinese have reacted to this policy by demanding that Chinese should be recognised as an official language in the same way as Malay and English, and that public examinations should be held in Chinese. The old cry that the Government is killing the Chinese language has been raised again. The Prime Minister has replied by pointing out that under the new educational policy Chinese can be learnt "from the lowest to the highest rungs" of the educational ladder. Furthermore, by next year all primary education will be free for the first time in the history of Malaya, and a Chinese child can have six years of primary education wholly in the Chinese medium without paying fees. In fact, primary education in each of Malaya's four main languages is offered to all children, in the language medium of the parents' choice, in primary schools which are fully maintained from public funds. "If we do not adopt this education system," the Prime Minister has said, "thousands of children passing out each year from the Chinese schools will not have the same opportunity as those who graduate from other schools, such as English schools. If they cannot get jobs because of their unacceptable qualifications, they will grow up hating the Government."

The Chinese are now desperately trying to find a way round this impasse. They realise that time is running out, and that the Government is determined to put its new educational policy into effect next year.

When the writer recently visited the Federation of Malaya, several suggestions for "getting round" the new policy were mentioned to him by Chinese school principals and teachers. One of them was that Chinese secondary schools should accept the Government's proposal that they convert themselves into national-type secondary schools, using either Malay or English (and the preference seems to be for English) as the medium of instruction, but keep Chinese as the "medium of administration" for use on all

possible occasions outside the classroom. Another was for "half" a school to accept the Government's offer and for the other "half" to be run as a private school. It is hoped that in this way the funds received for the national-type "half" can be "milked" to help maintain the private "half". In some schools, students are being urged to move to Singapore, where the educational policy in regard to Chinese secondary schools is different from that of the Federation of Malaya, and where they would still be able to study at Chinese-medium secondary schools. Mr Lim Lian Geok, President of the 7,000-member United Chinese School Teachers' Association and one of the most outspoken critics of the Government's new educational policy, has suggested that teachers in Chinese schools should contribute part of their salaries to help maintain those Chinese secondary schools that prefer not to convert themselves into national-type schools. And so it goes on.

The Chinese in Malaya have a reputation for being very skillful in evading Government regulations, but this time they will have to be very ingenious indeed to find a way out. Whatever the outcome, it is already clear that the Federation of Malaya's new educational policy constitutes an important landmark in the history of overseas Chinese education in Southeast Asia.

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